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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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Professor George D. Kellogg of Union College has contributed to the January number of *American Education* an incisive article on Classical Study as an Aid to Literary Appreciation. This article differs from the majority of those written in defence of the Classics in that it draws particular attention to the value of that minute philological study which in some quarters is regarded as the source of all the evils which now make up the condition of classical teaching. I cannot do better than quote his concluding words.

As college and high school curricula are at present constructed, except in "seminary courses" or studies in Dante, for example, nowhere else is the pupil held down to *minute intensive analysis and interpretation of small portions of good literature*. We classical teachers are idealists. We have had special training in philological method. We have text-books as near perfection as our means can command. We are trying to the best of our ability, directly and indirectly, by precept and example, to drill the logical faculties, impart scholarly method, stimulate curiosity, awaken the imagination, train critical powers, and set standards of taste. Our work is still, as it always has been, both complementary and supplementary to the departments of rhetoric and English literature. We prepare the mind for modern language study. We wield in Latin grammar and prose composition an implement as keen as mental arithmetic. We also develop the historic sense. But above all we are passing on the great traditions of the race.

It is commonly said that too little attention is paid to the literary study of the Classics in our colleges and too much attention is paid to philology. It is refreshing to hear a defence of the latter. This defence is eminently deserved because philological study is in its essentials science and in the methods of philology we are approximating most closely to the much praised scientific method. The difficulty is the overemphasis which is often laid upon philology. An ideal condition would be where both philology and literature have their proper place. After a proper introduction has been obtained into philological method there are many departments of philology which might well be left to the narrow specialist. Professor Kellogg, like many keen observers, is highly impressed by the slovenliness and lack of form of modern literature. He traces this to the lack of careful classical training; so have many other observers. But there is a danger of going too far. We have at the present day many writers whose style leaves little to criticize. They should be

sharply discriminated from the horde of every day writers whose main appeal to the public lies in those qualities which would naturally find expression in slovenly writing. Of course it is the popular taste which is to blame and this taste prefers a racy play to a correct one, a slangy romance to a pure one. Those who cater to this taste are naturally those whose training, such as it is, has not conduced to either mental or moral elevation. I think, therefore, that in lamenting the lower standards of writing we should separate what is ephemeral or is so intended from that which represents the careful efforts of a real thinker. Surely the greater part of modern poetry is well expressed. Whether it be by a Mackaye or a Watson, no criticism can be made of the manner of expression. In the domains of serious literature, history and criticism we can note little, if any, deterioration.

Is it not perhaps time for us to accept frankly the fact that classical training should not be expected to do wonders for the mass? When we speak of the good old English days we must remember that we are speaking of the English aristocracy of position, wealth and leisure, and though many of the great English writers were not either noble, wealthy or men of leisure, yet their environments and clientele belonged to those classes. This is an age of democracy run mad. The ignorant claim the privilege of regulating our systems of education: why should not the ignorant also settle the standards of literature? I have often maintained that a small number of students who come out of their college course able to read Greek and Latin with comparative ease and with minds broadened and mellowed by classical culture would do more to place Classics upon a high plane of dignity than thousands of half-taught and untaught boys and girls. It is human nature to respect the great and to imitate the means by which greatness was obtained and if our great writers and men of letters were frankly classicists classical training would be the fashion.

In an editorial published in the same number with Professor Kellogg's paper his paper is warmly praised.
G. L.

THE PERSONALITY OF TACITUS¹

In the autumnal period of a scholar's life the historical vision is apt to assert itself over against the

¹A lecture delivered before The Classical Club of Yale University.